

November 13, 2014

Christopher Calfee, Senior Counsel
Governor's Office of Planning and Research
1400 Tenth Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

Sent by email to CEQA.Guidelines@ceres.ca.gov

Dear Mr. Calfee,

I'm writing to comment on the draft guidelines for implementation of SB 743.

I am excited about the new guidelines because elimination of automobile congestion as a measure of environmental impact is essential to meeting the original goals of the California Environmental Quality Act. Current CEQA practice has the perverse effect of encouraging faster automobile travel at the expense of bicycle safety. In fact, removal of a mixed travel lane to install a bicycle lane may be considered to have a significant impact on the environment and trigger an extensive review, while the removal of the bike lane to add a mixed travel lane would not.

I have lived in the Westwood neighborhood of Los Angeles for the past three years. To the west, is bike-friendly Santa Monica. To the east, is car-centric Beverly Hills. As a bicyclist and a driver, my decision to use my bike or my car is directly proportionate to the amount of bike-safety infrastructure, or lack thereof, on the roadway. To the west, I ride by bike. To the east, I take my car. Increasing automobile throughput encourages people to drive more, and walk, bike, take transit less.

Increasing bicycling is an official goal of the state of California, as enshrined in the creation of the Active Transportation Program. More bicycling is also an important environmental goal that should be enabled by environmental analysis and regulations. Cities that enable bicycling by creating dedicated and protected space for safe riding have experienced an increase in riding. In turn, more bicycling improves the health of residents.¹ Therefore, I strongly support the draft guidelines with the specific recommendations that follow:

1. I support the use of vehicle miles traveled as a replacement for automobile congestion.
2. I strongly support the inclusion of a requirement to analyze the impacts of a transportation or development project on bicycle safety.
3. Please keep bicycling listed as an appropriate mitigation measure.
4. Apply the guidelines to the whole state as soon as possible.

I strongly support the direction you're going with these new guidelines. If adopted in final form, environmental analysis will improve to support health, safety, and prosperity in our communities.

Sincerely,
Drew Heckathorn

¹ "Bicycle-friendly city infrastructure in U.S. significantly increases cycling to work by residents, which can improve health of locals" Obesity Society study, November 3, 2014.